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House of Representatives

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2006

CONGRESSIONAL ASIAN AND PACIFIC AMERICAN CAUCUS

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join Chairman Honda and other members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in commemorating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

I am even more pleased that several Asian Pacific American organizations or governmental initiatives are holding their annual conventions in Hawaii this month. This includes the Federal Asian Pacific American Council and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

There are also several Filipino American organizations that will be hosting events this year in Hawaii, including the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, as 2006 marks the centennial of sustained immigration from the Philippines to the United States.

The Filipino Centennial Celebration Commission in Hawaii, led by Elias Beniga, and the Smithsonian Filipino American Centennial Commemoration have done a wonderful job in providing commemorative activities across the country, including in Hawaii and Washington, D.C.

I was pleased that Congress passed in December, H. Con. Res. 218, my resolution recognizing the centennial and acknowledging the contributions of Filipino-Americans to the United States.

While there are many issues of importance, a

timely issue I believe should be considered by Congress is the inclusion of my bill, H.R. 901, into any comprehensive immigration reform bill moving through Congress.

H.R. 901 would prioritize the permanent immigration petitions of the sons and daughters of Filipino World War II Veterans who were extended U.S. citizenship under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990. Most recently, I wrote to President Bush and Congressional leaders urging their inclusion of this provision in immigration reform legislation.

I believe my bill fulfills one of the bedrock principles of our federal immigration policy--family reunification--and warrants special consideration given the unique history between the United States and the Philippines, as well as the contributions of our Filipino World War II veterans to our country and to U.S. national security interests.

As we commemorate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, I celebrate the contributions of all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who call our country home, and I congratulate the Filipino American community for their centennial celebrations this year!